**38th Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship, incorporating the 13th International Forum of Research in School Librarianship, 2 – 4 September 2009, Abano Terme, Padua, Italy.**

Including:

Pre-conference workshops (31 August, 2009)

Library visits

IASL-IFLA Joint Meeting on Reading in the Digital Age. (1 September, 2009)

**Theme of the conference: School Libraries in the Picture: Preparing Pupils and Students for the Future**

UNESCO Link

<http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=29105&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html> (Appendix)

**Pre-conference workshops (31 August, 2009)**

1. Creativity @ Your School Library – Sabine Mahne, Director of LesArt, Berlin

This workshop focused on visual literacy, picture books, encouraging children to use their senses in discovering books, and book events hosted by LesArt to encourage reading.

1. Stimulating creativity and reading through making books according to Bruno Munari’s method. Roerto Pittarello. Professor of Visual Arts Education at the faculty of Education Sciences, University of Padua

This workshop was on stimulating creativity and reading through making books. It was a hands-on workshop, and stressed the value of children making their own books, and being able to experiment with their own creativity.

**IASL-IFLA Joint Meeting on Reading in the Digital Age. (1 September, 2009)**

1. The School Library and the Acquisition of the Pleasure of Reading and Researching – Professor Donatella Lombello, University of Padua, Italy

This presentation stressed the hybrid nature of today’s reader – oral, iconic, textual, plurimedial – and stressed the role of the school library in being the meeting place for all the methods of reading and types of media our students are exposed to, the meeting place for a variety of truths, both subjective (the pleasure or reading) and objective (research), which will lead to understanding. In ways the digital age brings us full circle back to oral literacy where the impact of and reaction to story was immediate.

1. Reading and Psychological Development – Guido Petter, University of Padua, Italy

An excellent lecture stressing the vital role of narrative texts in the psychological development of children and adolescents. Prof Petter used the metaphor of a magical cube – 6 faces that are all inter-connected. This inspiring presentation stressed the value of reading narrative texts at all ages, the importance of all genres at all ages, and the magic that leads to the intellectual, personal, social and emotional growth of children and adolescents.

1. Reading and books in a Digitalizing Age – Aiden Chambers – author and critic

Aiden Chambers linked his topic to brain research. Writing (drawing) comes before reading which has to be learned. We are not genetically programmed for reading. He stressed the need for children aged 0 - 3 to be read to, and steeped in a linguistically rich environment, and for students to be read to at every stage so that they have heard the words, and the ideas they need before they try to read them themselves. Sustained silent reading in a classroom environment is also vital. Chambers made the point that digital reading is different from e-learning in a web 2.0 environment where the reader can change, add, delete. Using a digital reader provides material that is not meant to be changed except for the formatting, a capability which can appeal to students. In Japan adolescents are reading and writing novels on their mobile phones – technology that should be widespread by 2011. This presentation acknowledged the power of technology in attracting and maintaining readers, but at the same time stressed the importance of the teaching and learning of reading and the role of significant adults in that process.

1. Reading promotion and the Involvement of Minorities – Xose Antonio Neira Cruz, Universita di Santiago de Compostela, Spain and IBBY 2010 Committee

This presentation decried the fact that children are no longer exposed to classical heroes, but instead watch short snippets on TV where the heroes are shallow. The children are not being steeped in the values of their culture. Is this reversible? The presentation introduced the IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) conference due to take place in Spain in 2010.

1. Prof. Andree-Jeanne Totemeyer, Namibian Children’s Book Forum

A very interesting presentation in terms of mother-tongue instruction. Prof. Totemeyer spoke of multilingualism and multiculturalism in Africa and its import on the reading culture. She argued strongly against early instruction being in a second language, claiming that it impacts negatively on every aspect of life. She claims that being taught in a foreign language robs children of basic concepts, that motivation drops away, and it is culturally damaging and disorientating. In Africa where people are in transition from orality to reading, reading is considered to be for education, not for pleasure. This attitude leads to aliteracy – people who can read, but choose not to. Reading is only for functionality, so parents with this attitude see no value in reading to their children. Education is often reduced to rote learning. 35% of children’s books published in Europe are text books. In Africa the figure is 95%.

1. International Children’s Digital Library (ICDL): using technology to expand Library Collections world-wide. Prof. Ann Weeks, University of Maryland, USA.

A digital library resource available in 51 languages from 63 countries.

1. Reading Education through Picture Books – Silvia Blezza Picherle, University of Verona, Italy

A discussion of picture books, illustrated narratives, concept books, and the differences between them. The role of picture books in the enjoyment of reading, and the exploration of meaning and emotion.

1. I See You/I Read You: How school libraries can foster reading improvement through visual literacy – Lesley Farmer, California State University

The impact of Visual literacy education on reading education was discussed. Elements of visual literacy:

* Interpret, understand and appreciate the meaning of visual images
* Communicate more effectively by applying visual design principles
* Produce visual messages using technology
* Use visual links to understand

Images are deciphered much more quickly and fully than words.

Processing images

Visual information cycle

Visual research process

Levels of visual messages

Visual effects affecting meaning – type elements, formatting

Color and culture

Picture books, graphic novels, comic books

The role of images in technology and literacy

Suggestions for activities involving visual literacy

1. Artist Gek Tessaro

<http://www.gektessaro.it/>

An ambidextrous author and illustrator, who used an overhead projector to share his work as he created it using both hands simultaneously to create different images! Amazing!

**IASL Conference (2 – 4 September 2009)**

**Opening Keynotes:**

1. UNESCO and Information Literacy – Misako Ito

Misako Ito stressed the link between UNESCO and school libraries. She stressed the paradigm shift from technology-driven information societies to human-centered knowledge societies. She spoke of knowledge creation, preservation, dissemination and utilization. She laid out the advances that UNESCO has made, with various partners, and outlined a project currently under way in Rabat, Morocco to digitize pages of classical Arabic literature.

1. Guided Inquiry: Learning in the 21st century – Carol Collier Kuhlthau, Professor Emerita, Rutgers University, USA.

The global interconnectedness of the 21st century requires new skills, new knowledge, new ways of learning. IT has changed the way we learn, work and are governed. Inquiry is the basis of information-age schools. Guided inquiry is the way to meet the many requirements of the curriculum through engaging, motivating and challenging learning, moving from fact finding to personal understanding.

Third Space –

Learning Centred

Recommended Guided Inquiry Team – 3 member team – Teacher/Librarian and 1 other (Specialist teacher/Literacy coach/TIF…….)

Extended team – include expertise from the community

1. Using Games to teach Information Literacy Skills - Laura Kaspari-Hohmann (US Office of Public Affairs)

Games encourage collaborative and interactive experiences – Board games (designer games) as well as digital games.

1. School Libraries and Social Networks – Gino Roncaglia (Universita della Tuscia, Viterbo, Italy)

Web 2.0 in 8 key concepts:

1. User generated content (UGC)
2. Semantics, formal ontologies (XML); social tagging
3. Collaborative filtering e.g. Amazon – recommendations
4. RSS feeds
5. Embedding, re-use, mash-up
6. Social networks
7. Page interaction (Ajax, WebApps, widgets)
8. Interface design

Tasks of the school library:

1. Information literacy
2. Active promotion of reading and research
3. Information driven support for learning and educational activities

(Special emphasis on information-driven, web-based organized informal learning)

Library page on Facebook

e.g. World Cat on Face Book

Social network page should not be a placeholder – the primary goal is to dynamically aggregate relevant information. Well chosen widgets and applications are useful.

There is no point in avoiding social networking sites in schools as students already have a presence there. Better to use them and talk about ethical and responsible use.

Social reading platforms:

(Shelfari, LibraryThing, Goodreads, We read, a Nobii)

Personal book shelf - Add one of these to FaceBook page

Collaborative filtering – recommendations – book pals

Book ratings, reviews, discussion

Discussion:

Library design – need to have a space for a gaming room where noise will not disturb others.

Need to teach time management

Sophistication is necessary to keep students engaged.

1. Information Literacy between School and University – Viola Hammer, Wurzburg University, Germany

Program for secondary school pupils working on research projects to learn how to use the university library.

1. You want to change the world? Make sure the principal is fighting with you.

Role of the school library – library in the school, or school in the library.

Collegiality, relationship.

**Concurrent sessions**

In addition to the key note speakers there were 4 sets of 5 concurrent sessions on each day. These sessions were ¾ hour in length, and often had no movement time between them. For the most part they were too short to do anything more than give a taste of the subject covered.

Presentations I attended included:

* Students, concept maps and the issue of transfer – James Herring
* Elementary school students’ perceptions of libraries and librarians – Elizabeth Lee
* WorldReaders: Young readers reading the world. Teachers-librarians using social networking to promote reading interests. – Ray Doiron
* What’s in it for me? Connecting the school librarian with the three International Baccalaureate programs – Ingrid Skirrow
* Action Research – Creative partnerships in learning and teaching – Linda Gibson-Langford
* Students as storytellers: Effects of Storytelling Instruction on Retell Fluency – Savan Wilson and Mary Ann Robinson
* The school library leading the way – Providing information literacy professional development for teachers – Elizabeth Probert
* The dispositions of exemplary school librarians. How professional dispositions relate to students learning in the 21st century.
* Visual Literacy, using picture books. Linking Art and post-modernism in picture books.

**Library visits:**

Marciana Library, Venice

Academic Library at University “Ca’Foscari”, Venice

Montegrotto Terme Primary School Library

“Antonio Vivaldi” Middle School Library

Biblioteca Civica di Abano terme – Abano terme Public Library

“Franca Ruffatti” School Library

“Cornaro” High School

Rainbow School Library

These visits spanned public libraries, primary, middle and high school libraries and academic libraries. The school libraries were staffed by competent and enthusiastic school librarians, providing good services for their students.

The academic and public libraries showcased the historical and art treasures that surrounded us in Italy, and visiting them was a valuable experience.

**What was most valuable to you personally**

Many of the presentations were valuable in that they were informative, thought-provoking, and often reassuring. However the most valuable aspect of the conference lay in networking with other librarians in international schools all over the world – discussing current research, sharing good practice, asking advice and listening to the ideas and opinions of others.

**What, if anything, was disappointing about the experience**

As mentioned previously, many of the presenters in the concurrent sessions did not have sufficient time to do justice to their presentations. However there was so much that was positive that this was not a major drawback.

**How your classroom instruction will change as a result of the experience**

I have come back with many practical ideas for improved library management and practice, gleaned largely from informal conversation with colleagues.

**How your contribution to your teaching team and/or the school will change as a result of the experience**

I will continue to strive for full collaboration with teachers at each grade level, and to encourage maximum use of the library resources. In the course of the conference, through both the presentations and conversations, the question of involving parents in their children’s reading was touched on frequently. It is an area of interest of mine, and I will be actively searching for ways of encouraging parents to become more involved.

**How you will share your learning with other members of staff**

Where appropriate, I will be happy to be involved in PD activities, and also to share in an informal manner.

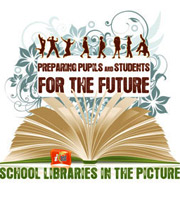
**Any suggestions you intend to bring to the administration for possible implementation at QA**

Being at the conference with Beverley was very valuable, as we were able to share ideas and thoughts as the conference proceeded.

**Whether you think similar events would be valuable for other members of staff**

The International Association of School Librarianship Conference is an extremely valuable one, and I recommend it highly for other librarians.

**Appendix – Unesco Report - IASL Conference focuses on role of school libraries in preparing pupils for the future** 11-09-2009 (Padua)

  
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UNESCO participated in the 38th Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL), which concluded last week in Padua, Italy. This year’s theme, School Libraries in the Picture: Preparing Pupils and Students for the Future, highlighted the increasingly important role of school libraries to equip students in the 21st century with the abilities to use information effectively and develop critical thinking and life-long learning skills that are essential to responsible citizenship.

While the significant contributions of school libraries to student learning have been demonstrated over the years, in the rapidly changing and competitive environment of the 21st century, the role of school libraries has shifted from one of technical work to intermediation, from conservation to innovation, and from reactive user-trainer modes to proactive teacher-trainer modes.   
  
This was the main theme of this year’s Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship that gathered more than 300 school librarians, teachers, library advisers, educational administrators, students and others who are responsible for library and information services in educational institutes from around the world.   
  
School librarians will therefore be increasingly contributing to UNESCO’s mandate for building knowledge societies. In particular school libraries will play a key role as catalysts for the introduction of media and information literacy policies in schools by engaging both students and teachers to acquire a combination of skills, competencies, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.   
  
The topics discussed at the Conference are closely connected with UNESCO’s work on a teacher-training curriculum for media and information literacy to be introduced worldwide. The curriculum aims to integrate media education and information literacy in the initial training of teachers at secondary school levels, and will be designed according to the needs of each country